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August 8, 2011

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H. *JEFielding*  
Director and Health Officer

SUBJECT: **WEST NILE VIRUS**

This is in response to the July 20, 2010 Motion by Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, directing the Department of Public Health (DPH) to 1) in conjunction with the Department of Public Works (DPW), support local Vector Control organizations to investigate and clear open water ways that harbor mosquito breeding; 2) fully implement the planned West Nile virus awareness and surveillance program by working cooperatively with the Mosquito Vector Control Districts, the State, and the Centers for Disease Control; and 3) work with local Vector Control districts to add coverage in the unincorporated areas.

Although there has been no meeting of the West Nile Virus Interagency Task Force of Los Angeles County as of the date of this response, the Greater Los Angeles County Vector District and the San Gabriel Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District have increased surveillance and enhanced management tactics based on elevated dead bird counts and birds testing positive for West Nile virus within their areas of coverage.

**Item #1: Clearing Of Open Water Ways To Prevent Mosquito Breeding**

The Greater Los Angeles County VCD continues to work closely with DPW to clear vegetation in waterways within their district boundaries. Despite effective management of vegetation and debris within channels during the fall, the extended growth period this spring presented an ongoing challenge to keep waterways clear of vegetation in several washes and in and around Harbor Lake. Timing of vegetation removal is crucial to the success of the plan and necessary to comply with California Department of Fish and Game requirements that specify retention of suitable riparian habitat for nesting birds during the summer breeding season. The pre-season reduction of vegetation has proven to be a successful approach, and both agencies are mindful of these seasonal guidelines.

**Item #2: Cooperative Efforts To Implement The Planned West Nile Virus Awareness And Surveillance Program**

Outreach continues in the schools and at various community events and local Districts are participating in the statewide radio advertisement to reach to a wider range of the public. The radio spots are aired in numerous languages on Metro Network stations in 18 counties including Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and Orange County. DPH participated this year by contributing funds towards the campaign. The Greater Los Angeles County VCD placed advertisements on the back of metro buses throughout their coverage area and recently sent 13,000 brochures to Los Angeles City Recreation and Parks for distribution to 66 aquatic facilities.

When Districts identify a "hot spot" for West Nile virus activity, they intensify control and surveillance and work closely with city officials to raise awareness through expanded media coverage, notifications, and community presentations.

Helicopter surveillance has been a valuable tool for the San Gabriel Valley MVCD and is responsible for nearly doubling the number of green pools identified and treated by the District this year. Technicians also monitor weekly foreclosure listings with pools and continue to observe the pools for potential mosquito breeding.

Greater Los Angeles County VCD is working with a company that offers satellite imagery and spectral data to help identify neglected pools and other potential mosquito breeding sources throughout their coverage area. Staffs have also been attending meetings with Los Angeles City regarding the implementation Low Impact Development ordinance. They are thus able to provide input during the development of the handbook and maintenance guidelines to ensure vector and mosquito-related issues are addressed.

**Item #3: Coverage For Unincorporated Areas**

Providing mosquito control services in unincorporated areas continues to be a major concern of the Task Force. The service agreement between DPH and the Antelope Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District for complaint coverage in the unincorporated areas of Agua Dulce, Acton, Lake Elizabeth, Lake Hughes, Leona Valley, Littlerock, Lake Los Angeles, and Pearblossom has again been negotiated and approved. The San Gabriel Valley MVCD continues to encourage annexation of Baldwin Park, and Greater Los Angeles County VCD continues to work with the city of La Canada-Flintridge to renew contract services as they explore their service options and possible annexation into the District.

The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitting requirements are scheduled to take effect on October 31, 2011. In order to comply with the Clean Water Act, Districts are now required to apply for a permit to discharge pesticides during mosquito abatement activities. Managers worry about strict compliance requirements, duplication of regulatory burdens, high costs of fees resulting from monitoring and testing, broad interpretation of standards that could result in citizen lawsuits, potential litigation from pesticide activists, and their ability to continue to protect their constituents from mosquitoes and disease while remaining in compliance with the legislation. Districts continue to work with the Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California to encourage legislative support of HR 872 which would provide mitigation to the increased regulatory burdens facing the Districts.

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We will provide you with a report following the next Task Force meeting. In the meantime, if you have any questions or need additional information, please let me know.

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c: Chief Executive Officer  
County Counsel  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors  
Director of Public Works  
Managers, Mosquito and Vector Control Districts